

# Samuel Myers Park Stewardship Project

By Julie Kinzelman

Few urban coastal wetlands remain in Wisconsin. Wetlands perform numerous ecosystem functions; removing pollutants, providing habitat, and creating coastal resiliency. From 2015 – 2017, the City of Racine undertook a large scale project to restore existing coastal wetlands at Samuel Myers Park as well as to increase stormwater capture and infiltration.

Green infrastructure additions— including constructed wetlands, a bioswale and rain garden— capture, store and treat stormwater runoff prior to its reaching Lake Michigan. Habitat enhancements— including butterfly gardens, a dry prairie and sand dunes— host numerous varieties of native plants, shrubs and trees, making the park an attractive stopover for migrating birds and insects. Earning a “5 Blooms Bronze Award” from the 2016 International Communities in Bloom Committee for shoreline rehabilitation efforts, Samuel Myers Park achieved Monarch Waystation certification from Monarch Watch in 2017.

A visit to the park and walk along the Lake Michigan Pathway or Oakes Trail will provide visitors with an ever changing coastal landscape, replete with stunning views of Lake Michigan punctuated by explosions of color from the flowering varieties of native vegetation unique to each of the habitat zones: upland butterfly gardens, the rain garden, prairie, sand dunes and wetlands.

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Funding, provided by the US Forest Service, is allowing naturalization of the site to continue, increasing tree canopy and native vegetation with assistance from the Great Lakes Community Conservation Corps and AmeriCorps NCCC.



*Top photo:* Monarch on Bergamot at Samuel Myers Park, by Julie Kinzelman. *Right photo:* Sand Prairie in Autumn at Samuel Myers Park, by Julie Kinzelman.